

Til at the laste he seyde, he wolde slepe,  
And on the gres adoun he leyde him tho;  
And I after gan rome to and fro  
Til that I herde, as that I welk allone,  
How he bigan ful woefully to grone.

Tho gan I stalke him softly bihinde,  
And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne,  
As I can clepe ayein now to my minde,  
Right thus to Love he gan him for to pleyne;  
He seyde: Lord! have routhe upon my peyne,  
Al have I been rebel in myn entente;  
Now, mea culpa, lord! I me repente.

O god, that at thy disposicioun  
Ledest the fyn, by juste purveyaunce,  
Of every wight, my lowe confessioun  
Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce  
As lyketh thee, but from desesperaunce,  
That may my goost departe away fro thee,  
Thou be my sheld, for thy benignitee.

For certes, lord, so sore hath she me wounded  
That stod in blak, with lokyng of hir yen,  
That to myn hertes botme it is ysounded,  
Thorugh which I woot that I mot nedes dyen;  
This is the worste, I dar me not biwryen;  
And wel the hotter been the gledes rede,  
That men hem wryen with asshe pale & dede.

With that he smoot his heed adoun anon,  
And gan to motre, I noot what, trewely.  
And I with that gan stille away to goon,  
And leet therof as nothing wist hadde I,  
And come ayein anon and stood him by,  
And seyde: Awake, ye slepen al to longe;  
It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe,

That slepen so that no man may yow wake.  
Who sey ever or this so dul a man?  
Ye, freend, quod he, do ye your hedes ake  
For love, and lat me liven as I can.  
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,  
Yet made he tho as fresh a contenaunce,  
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.

This passed forth, til now, this other day,  
It fel that I com roming al allone  
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay  
Upon his bed; but man so sore grone  
Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone,  
Ne wiste I nought; for, as I was cominge,  
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleyninge.

Of which I took somewhat suspicioun,  
And neer I com, and fond he wepte sore;  
And God so wis be my savacioun,  
As never of thing hadde I no routhe more.  
For neither with engyn, ne with no lore,  
Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him kepe;  
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.

And God wot, never, sith that I was born,  
Was I so busy no man for to preche,  
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Ne never was to wight so depe ysworn,  
Or he me tolde who mighte been his leche.  
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,  
Or alle his woful wordes for to soune,  
Ne bid me not, but ye wol see me swowne.

But for to save his lyf, and elles nought,  
And to non harm of yow, thus am I driven;  
And for the love of God that us hath wrought,  
Swich chere him dooth, that he and I may liven.  
Now have I plat to yow myn herte schryven;  
And sin ye woot that myn entente is clene,  
Tak hede therof, for I non yvel mene.

And right good thrift, I pray to God, have ye,  
That han swich oon ycaught withoute net;  
And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see,  
Wel in the ring than is the ruby set.  
Ther were never two so wel ymet,  
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre:  
Ther mighty God yet graunte us see that hour!

Nay, therof spak I not, a, ha! quod she,  
As helpe me God, ye shenden every deel!  
O mercy, dere nece, anon quod he,  
Whatso I spak, I mente nought but weel,  
By Mars the god, that helmed is of steel;  
Now beth nought wrooth, my blood, my nece dere,  
Now wel, quod she, foryeven be it here!

With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente;  
And Lord, how he was glad and wel bigoon!  
Criseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente,  
But straught into hir closet wente anon,  
And sette here doun as stille as any stoon,  
And every word gan up and doun to winde,  
That he hadde seyde, as it com hir to minde;

And wex somdel astonied in hir thought,  
Right for the newe cas; but whan that she  
Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought  
Of peril, why she oughte afered be.  
For man may love, of possibilittee,  
A womman so, his herte may tobrete,  
And she nought love ayein, but if hir leste.

But as she sat allone and thoughte thus,  
Chasery aroos at skarmish al withoute,  
And men cryde in the strete: See, Troilus  
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!  
With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute:  
Al go we see, caste up the latis wyde;  
For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde;

For other wey is fro the yate noon  
Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne.  
With that com he and al his folk anon  
An esy pas rydinge, in routes tweyne,  
Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,  
For which, men say, may nought disturbed be  
That shal bityden of necessitee.

This Troilus sat on his baye stede,  
Al armed, save his heed, ful richely,

And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,  
On whiche he rood a pas, ful softly;  
But swich a knightly sighte, trewely,  
As was on him, was nought, withouten faille,  
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.

So lyk a man of armes and a knight  
He was to seen, fulfid of heigh prowessse;  
For bothe he hadde a body and a might  
To doon that thing, as wel as hardinesse;  
And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse,  
So fresh, so yong, so weldy semed he,  
It was an heven upon him for to see.

His helm tohewen was in twenty places,  
That by a tissew heng, his bak bihinde,  
His sheld todasshed was with swerdes & maces,  
In which men mighte many an arwe finde  
That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde;  
And ay the peple cryde: Here cometh our joye,  
And, next his brother, holdere up of Troye!

For which he wex a litel reed for shame,  
Whan he the peple upon him herde cryen,  
That to biholde it was a noble game,  
How sobreliehe he caste doun his yen.  
Criseyde gan al his chere aspyen,  
And leet so soft it in hir herte sinke,  
That to herself she seyde: Who yaf me drinke?

For of hir owene thought she wex al reed,  
Remembringe hir right thus: Lo, this is he  
Which that myn uncle swereth he moot be deed,  
But I on him have mercy and pitee;  
And with that thought, for pure ashamed, she  
Gan in hir heed to pulle, and that as faste,  
Whyl he and al the peple forby paste,

And gan to caste and rollen up and doun  
Withinne hir thought his excellent prowessse,  
And his estat, and also his renoun,  
His wit, his shap, and eek his gentillesse;  
But most hir favour was, for his distresse  
Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a routhe  
To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

Now mighte som envyouus jangle thus:  
This was a sodeyn love, how mighte it be  
That she so lightly lovede Troilus  
Right for the firste sighte; ye, pardee?  
Now whoso seyth so, mote he never thee!  
For every thing, a ginning hath it nede  
Eral be wrought, withouten any drede.

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly  
Yaf him hir love, but that she gan enclyne  
To lyke him first, and I have told yow why;  
And after that, his manhod and his pyne  
Made love withinne hir herte for to myne,  
For which, by proces and by good servyse,  
He gat hir love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,  
Sat in hir seven the house of hevne tho,

Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,  
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.  
And, sooth to seyn, she nas nat al a fo  
To Troilus in his nativitee;  
God woot that wel the soner spedde he.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe,  
That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne faste  
Unto Criseyde, that heng hir heed ful lowe,  
Theras she sat allone, and gan to caste  
Wheron she wolde apoynte hir at the laste,  
If it so were hir eem ne wolde cesse,  
For Troilus, upon hir for to presse.

And, Lord! so she gan in hir thought argue  
In this matere of which I have yow told,  
And what to doon best were, and what eschue,  
That plyted she ful ofte in many fold.  
Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold,  
And what she thoughte somewhat shal I wryte,  
As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte.

She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone  
She knew by sighte and eek his gentillesse,  
And thus she seyde: Al were it nought to done,  
To graunte him love, yet, for his worthinesse,  
It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse,  
In honestee, with swich a lord to dele,  
For myn estat, and also for his bele.

Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he;  
And sith he hath to see me swich delyt,  
If I wolde utterly his sighte flece,  
Paraunter he mighte have me in dispyt,  
Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt;  
Now were I wys, me hate to purchase,  
Withouten nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure,  
for though a man forbode dronkenesse,  
He nought forget that every creature  
Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse;  
Eek sith I woot for me is his distresse,  
I ne oughte not for that thing him despyse,  
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.

And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon,  
His thewes goode, and that he is not nyce.  
Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, is he noon;  
To wys is he to do so gret a vyce;  
Ne als I nel him never so cheryce,  
That he may make avaunt, by juste cause;  
He shal me never binde in swiche a clause.

Now set a cas, the hardest is, ywis,  
Men mighten deme that he loveth me:  
What dishonour were it unto me, this?  
May I him lette of that? why nay, pardee!  
I knowe also, and alday here and see,  
Men loven wommen al this toun aboute;  
Be they the wers? why, nay, withouten doute.

I think eek how he able is for to have  
Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,